

NO. 12

FALL
ISSUE

TEN CENTS



Leading COMICS

A MILLION DOLLARS
WORTH OF ACTION
IN

"The Million Dollar
CHALLENGE!"



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*Because the War Production Board has ordered a reduction in the use of paper, MORE FUN and ADVENTURE will be published bi-monthly; ALL-FLASH, ALL-STAR COMICS, WONDER WOMAN and MUTT & JEFF will become quarterlies; ALL-AMERICAN will be published only eight times a year, and PICTURE STORIES FROM THE BIBLE only twice a year until further notice.

WANT ACTION?



WANT MYSTERY?



WANT LAUGHS?



LOOK FOR THE
SUPERMAN-DC SYMBOL...
IT'S YOUR GUARANTEE
OF THE **BEST** IN
MAGAZINE COMICS!



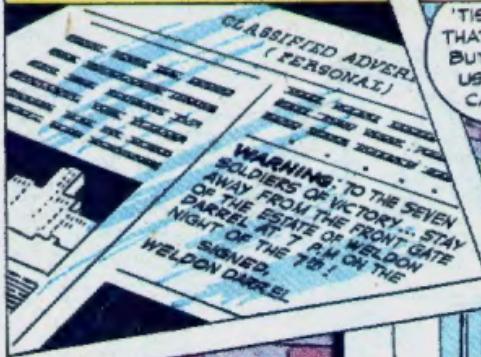


FOR ERRATIC, ECCENTRIC AND UNPREDICTABLE CONDUCT, IT WOULD BE HARD TO BEAT THE ANTICS OF THE BEAMINLY BENEVOLENT MILLIONAIRE WHO INVITES GUESTS TO HIS ESTATE BY WARNING THEM TO STAY AWAY! THIS IS THE KIND OF "REVERSE ENGLISH" INVITATION THE LEGIONNAIRES RECEIVE, AND THEY RESPOND TO ITS LURE! BUT THE REAL SURPRISES ARE STILL TO COME, AS THE CAPTIVES OF THIS CROCHETTY CROESUS KNOW FULL WELL BEFORE ACCEPTING THE...

"MILLION DOLLAR CHALLENGE!"



NEWSPAPERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY CARRY A STRANGE AD...



NATURALLY, THEREFORE, ON THE NIGHT OF THE SEVENTH...

'TIS CLEAR, COMRADES, THAT THIS DEFIANCE WAS BUT A MEANS TO BRING US HERE! AND YET WHAT CAN BE ITS ULTIMATE PURPOSE?

DARBEL IS A MILLIONAIRE, BUT ON THE WHACKY SIDE, ACCORDING TO THE PAPERS!

POOR MAN, WHACKY - RICH MAN, "ECCENTRIC"!

UNEXPECTEDLY...

ZOUNDS! MY BLADE LEAPS FROM ITS SCABBARD AS IF DRAWN BY A MAGNET!

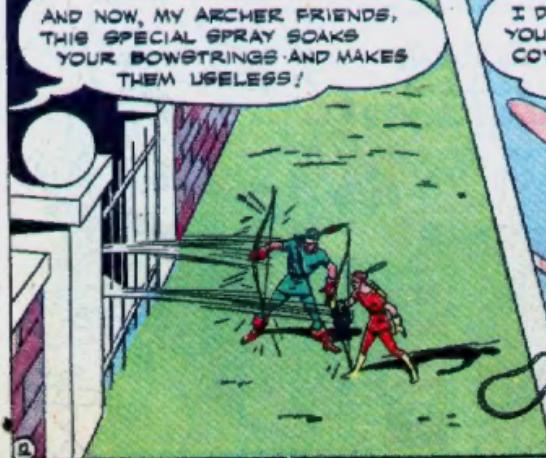


NOW THE GATE HOLDS IT SO CLOSE, I CAN NOT PULL IT AWAY!

HA, HA! I TOLD YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM THE GATE!



AND NOW, MY ARCHER FRIENDS, THIS SPECIAL SPRAY SOAKS YOUR BOWSTRINGS AND MAKES THEM USELESS!



I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AIMIN' TO DO, COYOTE, BUT THIS ROPE...

TUT, TUT, VIGILANTE, DON'T BOTHER TO UNCOIL IT!





POWERFUL HYDRAULIC PRESSURE SWEEPS THE LEGIONNAIRES INTO A PREPARED PIT! A STEEL DOOR CLANGS SHUT OVERHEAD!

SUDDENLY A GAY, HIGH-PITCHED VOICE COMES FROM BEHIND A WALL OF STEEL...



AFTER A SUMPTUOUS REPAST...

NOW, GENTLEMEN, IT'S TIME TO REVEAL THE REAL REASON I INVITED YOU HERE! IT'S TO ISSUE A **CHALLENGE...** A CHALLENGE WHICH YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY REFUSE!

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, PAL! IF WE DON'T LIKE IT... WE NEVER ACCEPT **NOTHIN'!**

AH! BUT HEAR WHAT THE REWARD IS! IF YOU ACCEPT AND WIN... I'LL GIVE A MILLION DOLLARS TO ANY CHARITY YOU NAME! THINK OF THE GOOD THE MONEY WILL DO! CAN YOU AFFORD TO TURN THAT DOWN?



A MILLION DOLLARS?
THAT ISN'T SO EASY
TO REFUSE!

BUT ALL THE SAME,
WE'RE NOT ACCEPTING
UNTIL WE HEAR YOUR
PROPOSITION, MR. DARREL!



IT'S VERY SIMPLE! I HAVE HIDDEN FIVE DIFFERENT KINDS OF VALUABLES IN AS MANY DIFFERENT PLACES... ALL YOU MUST DO IS FIND THEM WITH THE AID OF CLUES I HAVE PREPARED! VERY SIMPLE, INDEED!



SOUNDS ALMOST TOO SIMPLE, STRANGER... IT CAN'T BE EASY, OR YOU WOULDN'T BE OFFERIN' US A MILLION TO DO IT! BUT ALL THE SAME, I VOTE TO ACCEPT!

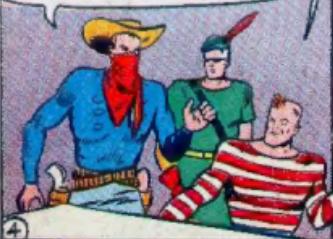
SURE!
WHAT'VE
WE GOT
TO LOSE?

AFTER FURTHER BRIEF
CONSULTATION...

HAND OVER
YOUR CLUES,
MR. DARREL...
WE'RE ALL
SET TO GO!

AND
PLEASE
WRITE CHECK
QUICK... WE BE
BACK IN HURRY
TO GET!

AH,
WHAT SUBLIME
CONFIDENCE!
YOU QUITE CON-
Vince me you'll
WIN! THE BEST
OF LUCK GENTLE-
MEN!



FTHE LEGIONNAIRES WILL CERTAINLY NEED THE BEST OF LUCK! UNKNOWN AND UNSUSPECTED PERILS LURK IN UNIMAGINED PLACES... AND DEATH WILL LASH OUT VIOLENTLY AS THEY PURSUE THE CRYPTIC AND BAFFLING CLUES LEFT BY AN ECCENTRIC MILLIONAIRE!

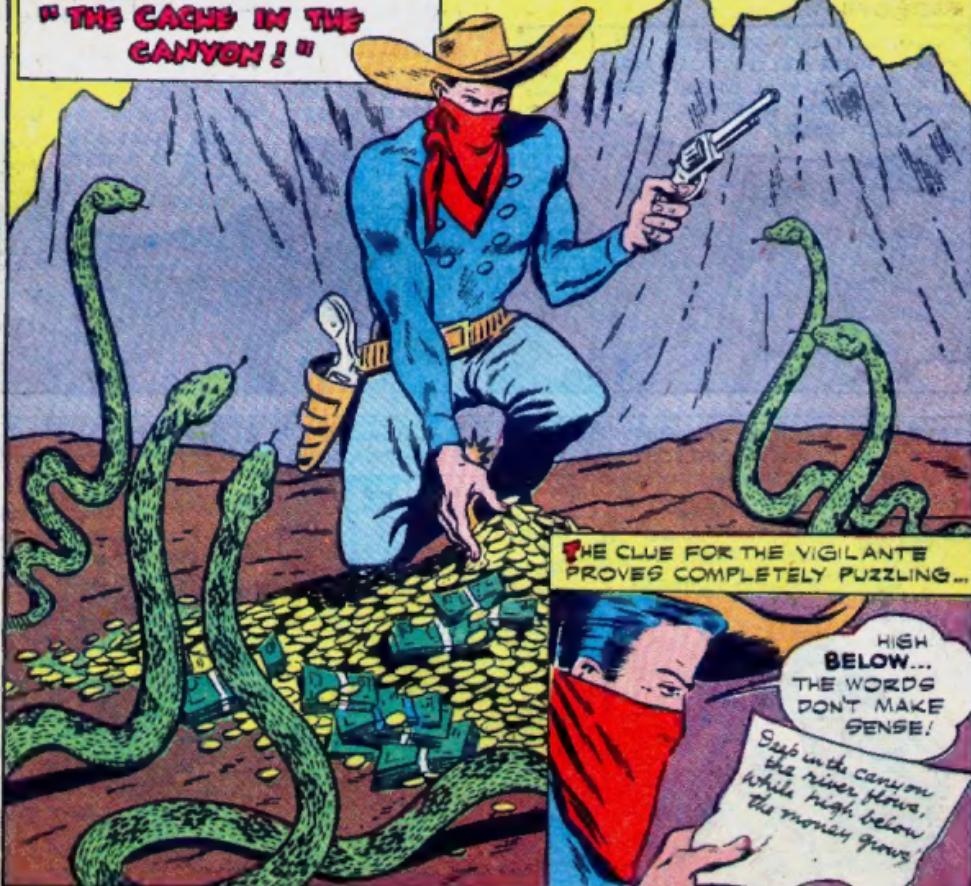
CHAP II

Starring the

VIGILANTE

THE VIGILANTE'S QUEST FOR HIDDEN WEALTH TAKES HIM TO FAMILIAR COUNTRY! YET FAMILIARITY DOES NOT SPELL LACK OF DANGER, NOR DOES IT LESSEN THE MYSTERY DEVISED BY THE HIDER OF RICHES! ALL THE STRENGTH OF HIS MUSCLES, THE SUPPLENESS OF HIS LASSO, THE ACCURACY OF HIS GUNFIRE, MUST BE ENLISTED IN THE WESTERN WARRIOR'S STRUGGLE TO PRESERVE HIS LIFE WHILE RIDING SIGN ALONG THE TRAIL THAT LEADS TO ...

"THE CACHE IN THE CANYON!"





IN FACT THIS DON'T
HELP AT ALL! THE WEST'S
FULL OF CANYONS...



AND SO THE VIGILANTE TRAVELS WEST!
PRESENTLY...

I STILL CAN'T FIGGER
WHAT "HIGH BELOW" CAN MEAN...
BUT MAYBE I WILL WHEN I SEE
THAT CANYON! FASTER,
OLD HOSS!



PETE, HE'S HEADIN' STRAIGHT
FER THE CLAIM! SOMEBODY
DID PUT HIM WISE! HURRY UP
AND GET THE BOYS!

OKAY,
BOSS, THEY'LL SET
MOVIN' PRONTO!



BUT THE WESTERN WADDY PUTS
HIS BRAIN TO WORK ON THE
PROBLEM...

DARREL OWNS LAND ALL
OVER THE COUNTRY... MAYBE
HE OWNS SOME IN THE WEST
TOO! I'LL TELEGRAPH THE
DIFFERENT STATE LAND-
OFFICES AND WAIT FOR THE
ANSWERS!



A LITTLE LATER...

AH... THE OLD COOT
OWNS A MINING CLAIM
IN WYOMING THAT
STRETCHES RIGHT UP TO
A CANYON! AND IT WAS
NEVER WORKED! MAYBE
THAT'S THE ONE!



BUT FROM BEHIND A NEARBY RIDGE,
THE PUNCHING PLAINSMAN'S PROGRESS
IS OBSERVED BY TWO PAIRS OF KEEN
COLD EYES...

THE VIGILANTE!
WHAT'S HE DOIN'
HERE, BOSS?
HE MAY BE AFTER US!
MAYBE SOMEBODY
SUSPECTS WHERE
THAT GOLD DUST IS
COMIN' FROM!



SOON, AS THE VIGILANTE
REACHES HIS DESTINATION...

NOW TO TAKE A
LOOK AROUND,
AND...



UNEXPECTEDLY...

KIYODPLIN' COY-
OTES, I DIDN'T
SEE THAT GOPHER
HOLE, BUT IT'S A
GOOD THING! I
TRIPPED JUST IN
TIME TO DODGE
SOMEBODY'S
BULLETS!





BUT AS THE WESTERN WADDY IS ABOUT
TO BE HURLED INTO THE DEPTHS...

ONE, TWO... THIS SHORE IS A
PLEASURE, BOSS!



THREE... YIII!
HE'S PULLIN' ME
AFTER HIM!

MIGHT BE LONELY
DOWN IN THE
CANYON, VARMINT...
I'M AIMIN' TO HAVE
COMPANY!



I GOT YUH, BOSS!
SHOOT THE VIGILANTE,
SOMEBODY... MAKE
'IM LET GO!

HUH...? RECKON HE
COULDNT HOLD ON NO
LONGER! PUT AWAY YORE
COLTS, BOYS... THE
VIGILANTE'S FINISHED!



HE'S SO FAR DOWN,
YUH CAN'T EVEN SEE
HIM CLEAR! HE
LOOKS LIKE
JUST A BLACK
SPECK! BUT
HE SHORE
MAKES A
PURTY
SOUND!

YEAH!
AND NOW
WE CAN GO
BACK TO
WORK! COME
ON, BOYS!



IS THE VIGILANTE FINISHED? ONLY SOME
ONE IGNORANT OF THE LARRUPING
LARIATEER'S WILES COULD BELIEVE
THAT!

LUCKY THIS LEDGE
WAS HERE! ALL I HAD
TO DO WAS SHOVE A
ROCK OVER... AND THEY
THOUGHT THE CRASH
CAME FROM ME!
WONDER WHY THEY
WANTED TO KILL
ME, ANYWAY?



THIS IS A KIND OF
FUNNY PLACE TO
FIND HERE, AT THAT!
HIGH UP ABOVE THE
CANYON, AND JUST BELOW
THE TOP... GALLOPIN'
GOPHERS, WHAT DID
I JUST SAY?





"HIGH BELOW!... IT'S WHAT THAT CLUE MUST HAVE MEANT! THAT TREASURE I'M LOOKING FOR MUST BE RIGHT HERE!"



"WELL, IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO LEARN IF... WHOA! I'D BETTER HOLD ON A MINUTE!"



A WISE PRECAUTION....

"JUST AS I SUSPECTED! RATTLESNAKES! GOTTA GET RID OF THEM FIRST!"



MOMENTS LATER...

"DARREL'S TREASURE! NOW TO GET IT BACK TO HIM... AFTER I FINISH THE HUMAN RATTLES UP ABOVE!"



"IN FACT, IT MIGHT BE RIGHT INSIDE THIS HOLE... DARREL'S THE KIND OF COOT WHO'D PICK A CACHE LIKE THAT!"



"SAME THING MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED HERE AS HAPPENS TO A GOPHER HOLE... THERE MIGHT BE SOME DANGEROUS TENANTS INSIDE! I'D BETTER TRIM THIS SHRUB OFF, AND INVESTIGATE BEFORE I PUT MY HANDS IN!"



"I'LL ANCHOR THE ROPE TO THIS SPUR OF ROCK, THEN CLIMB UP!"





MADE IT! NOW TO CATCH THEM BY SURPRISE!

WITH WILDCAT FURY, THE WESTERN WADDY RIPS INTO THE ASTOUNDED BAD MEN!

THE VIGILANTE! HE'S THAT THOUSAND FOOT FALL KINDA STUNNED ME, SIDEWINDER. OR I'D HAVE BEEN BACK SOONER! TAKE THIS!

YIII... THEM SPURS!

DON'T MIND A LITTLE HOSSIN' AROUND, VARMINT!

PRESENTLY...

NOW YUH DANGED COYOTES, ARE YUH GONNA ADMIT WHAT YOU DID, OR DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?

THEY MUST FIGURE I KNOW, OR THEY'D NEVER HAVE TRIED TUH KILL ME!

DON'T RUB IT IN VIGILANTE... WE KNEW YUH WAS WISE WHEN WE SAW YUH HEADIN' HERE!

SOMEHOW YUH FOUND OUT WE WAS WORKIN' THIS CLAIM THAT DON'T BELONG TO US! WE WAS TAKIN' THE GOLD DUST OUT, AND TRYIN' TO MAKE THINGS LOOK LIKE NOBODY HAD BEEN AROUND!

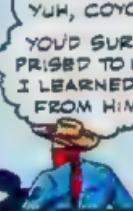
HMM, AND KNOWIN' THAT THE OWNER LIVED IN THE EAST, YOU WERENT AFRAID OF BEING FOUND OUT!

SHORE, WE FIGURED WE HAD EVERYBODY FOOLED... UNTIL WE SAW YOU COMIN' ALONG! WE STILL DON'T KNOW HOW YUH LEARNED THE TRUTH!

JUST AS YOU'LL BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT THERE'S MORE MONEY IN THIS BOX THAN IN ALL THE DUST YOU'VE TAKEN! I'LL ADD THE GOLD DUST AS AN EXTRA SURPRISE FOR THE CLAIM'S OWNER!

YO'D BE SURPRISED IF I TOLD YUH, COYOTE...

YO'D SURE BE SURPRISED TO KNOW I LEARNED IT FROM HIM!





"The leaflets tell 'em they'd be better off by surrendering . . . and the box of Wheaties will convince 'em."



HERE'S A SUGGESTION WE'D LIKE TO DROP WITH YOU.
TRY WHEATIES . . . AND LET THOSE BIG WHOLE WHEAT FLAKES CONVINCE YOU THAT THE GOOD BREAKFAST YOU NEED CAN BE REAL FUN TO EAT. YOU GET CRACK WHOLE GRAIN NOURISHMENT IN WHEATIES. THE SAME VALUABLE FOOD ENERGY RECOMMENDED BY LEADING COACHES AND FAMOUS ATHLETES. YOU GET THAT WELL-KNOWN "SECOND HELPING" FLAVOR, TOO. A ZIPPY, NUT-SWEET FLAVOR THAT MAKES A DIRECT HIT WITH YOU.

TAKE OFF WITH A LOAD OF GOOD NOURISHMENT AND GOOD FLAVOR AND GOOD FUN... EVERY MORNING. TAKE ON A MAN-SIZED BOWLFUL OF MILK, FRUIT, AND WHEATIES, "BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS."



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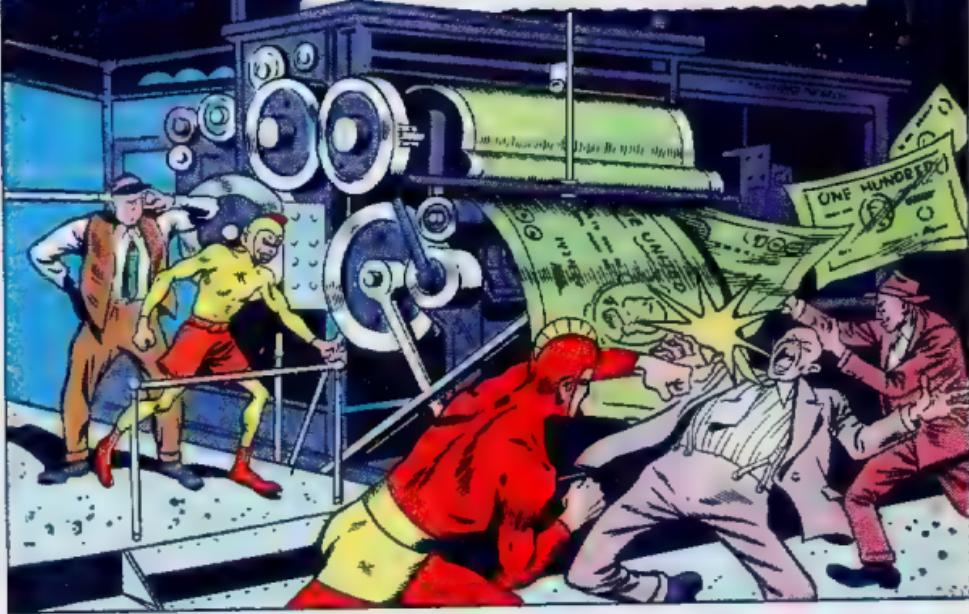
"BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS"
WITH MILK AND FRUIT

Wheaties and "Breakfast of Champions" are registered trade marks of General Mills, Inc.

CHAP. 3

THE CRIMSON AVENGER, TOO, RECEIVES A VERSIFIED CLUE! STRANGE AND CUNNING INDEED IS THE HIDING PLACE HE SEEKS, AND STRANGER STILL, AS WELL AS UNEXPECTED, IS THE FACT THAT HE AND HIS FAITHFUL ALLY, WING, MUST RISK DANGER FROM LAW-BREAKERS AND LAWMEN ALIKE WHEN THE SEARCH BEARS FRUIT! NOTHING COULD COME IN HANDIER, THEN, THAN THE GIFT GRANTED BY...

"THE POWER OF THE PRESS!"



THE CRIMSON AVENGER AND HIS LOYAL ALLY STARE VACANTLY AT TWO LINES OF VERSE...

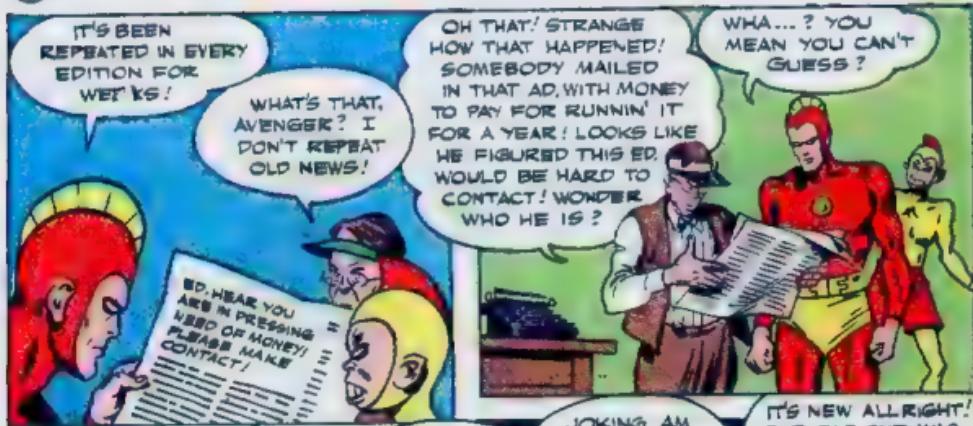
"A cry of agony, loud
and long,
Brings greater wealth
than any song."

CLUE MAKE
NO SENSE, MIST'
CLIMSON!

WAIT A MINUTE,
WING! I HAVE AN
IDEA!







OH THAT! STRANGE HOW THAT HAPPENED! SOMEBODY MAILED IN THAT AD, WITH MONEY TO PAY FOR RUNNIN' IT FOR A YEAR! LOOKS LIKE HE FIGURED THIS ED. WOULD BE HARD TO CONTACT! WONDER WHO HE IS?

WHY...? YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T GUESS?



SOON AFTER...

I'VE GOT MY FINGERS CROSSED, WING... IF THEY'VE MELTED THAT OLD PRESS ALREADY, WE'RE OUT OF LUCK!

IF TREASURE HIDDEN THERE, MR. DARREL ALSO OUT OF LUCK!

AFTER ALL, TREASURE BELONG TO HIM!





AS THE CRIMSON AVENGER LEAVES...

POLICE? THE CRIMSON AVENGER STOLE SOME VALUABLE JEWELS FROM ME... STOP HIM QUICK!

WHY...? THE CRIMSON AVENGER STOLE SOMETHING? DON'T KID ME!

BUT THE FRENZIED MAN INSISTS, AND PRESENTLY...

CALLING ALL CARS! PICK UP THE CRIMSON AVENGER AND BRING HIM IN! HE IS ACCUSED OF ROBBERY!

AMONG THE STARTLED LISTENERS TO THE POLICE BROADCAST ARE THREE GENTLEMEN FELONIOUSLY INCLINED...

PICK UP THE CRIMSON AVENGER AND BRING HIM IN! HE IS ACCUSED OF ROBBERY!

DO ME EARS GO BACK ON ME, OR ARE DEY REALLY AFTER DA CRIMSON AVENGER?

IF YOU HOLD WHAT I HOLD, DERE AFTER H M!

THERE HE IS NOW! COME ON, BOYS, D'SLL BE GOOD... WE'RE GONNA ARREST THE CRIMSON AVENGER, AND TOIN HIM OVER TO DA COPS!



STICK 'EM UP, YA DO-TY CROOK! YOU'RE TROUGH!

WHY...? CHARLIE THE HORSE TALKING LIKE THAT TO ME?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU... BUT IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, YOU'VE FOUND IT!

OWWW!

WING NO STICK 'EM UP... WING BANG 'EM DOWN!







FUNNY INDEED...
BUT WILL IT HAVE
UNEXPECTED
CONSEQUENCES
FOR OTHERS OF
THE SEVEN
SOLDIERS OF
VICTORY?
RUMORS ARE EASIER
TO START THAN TO
KILL... AND YOU'LL
BE SURPRISED
TO SEE WHAT
FANTASTIC FORMS
THEY CAN TAKE!

Starring

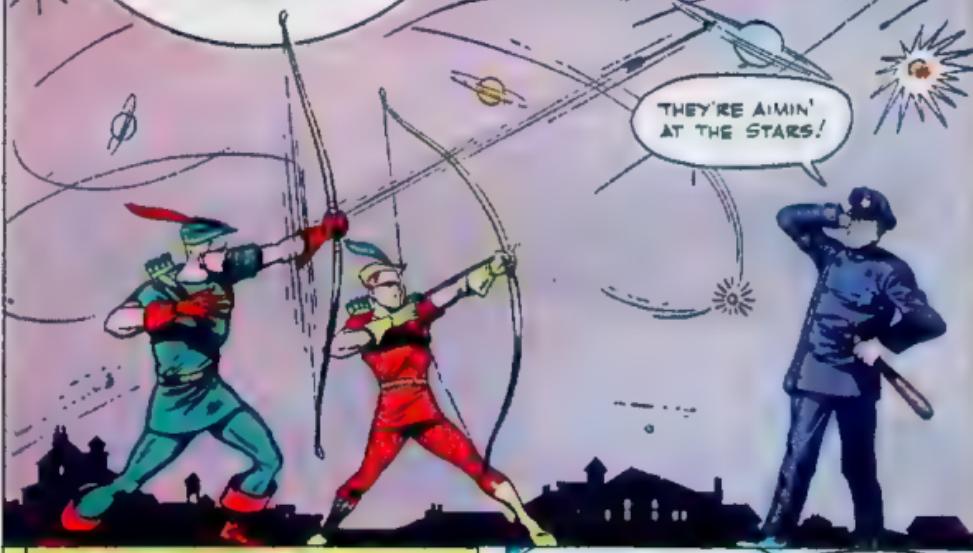
A HIDING PLACE IN PUBLIC VIEW, PROVIDED BY THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES, CHALLENGES THE INGENUITY OF THE GREEN ARROW AND SPEEDY TO THE UTMOST. AND WHEN THE WIZARD ARCHERS FIND THEMSELVES FACING THE SUSPICIONS OF THE POLICE AS WELL, THEIR EFFORTS SEEMED FOREDOOMED TO FAILURE, AS THEY ATTEMPT TO LOOT...

• THE SAFE FROM THE SKY! •

The GREEN ARROW

CHAR
4

THEY'RE AIMIN'
AT THE STARS!



AS A SWIFT CAR DRAWS TO A HALT WITH A SCREECH OF BRAKES, AN ALERT POLICEMAN HASTENS FORWARD...

THIS TIME
THEY'RE NOT
GETTING AWAY,
WHOEVER THEY
ARE... ILL...

THE GREEN ARROW
AND SPEEDY!

HELLO, OFFICER!
EXPECTING
SOMEBODY
ELSE?



N-NOT EXACTLY, GREEN ARROW! BUT ABOUT A MONTH AGO, I ALMOST CAUGHT SOME CROOKS TRYING TO ROB THE MUSEUM! I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE THEY WERE COMING BACK...

WE HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR...

HOPE HE'S NOT AS STUBBORN AS THEY SAY HE IS!!

THE METEORITE MR. DARREL LENT US IS OUR BEST EXHIBIT! I WON'T HEAR OF YOU TAKING IT AWAY!

BUT... WE HAVE MR. DARREL'S PERMISSION...

THEN MR. DARREL CHANGES HIS MIND VERY SUDDENLY! HE LENT US THAT METEORITE FOR THE EXHIBITION, AND HERE IT STAYS! GOOD DAY!

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT, G.A.? THE METEORITE BELONGS TO DARREL AND IT'S OKAY WITH HIM FOR US TO TAKE IT...

AND THIS GUY WON'T LET US!

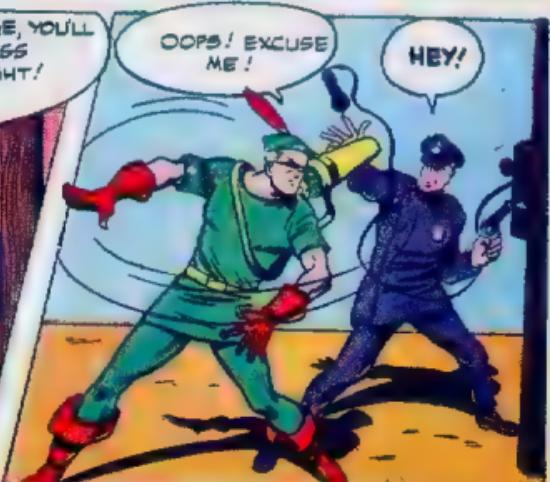
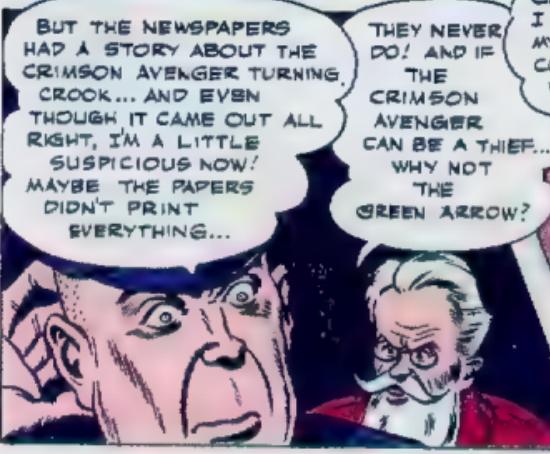
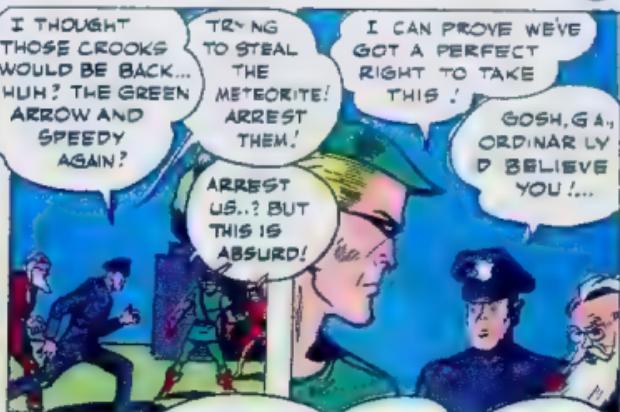
HE HAS NO LEGAL RIGHT TO STOP US SPEEDY! THE LAW'S ON OUR SIDE... SO WE'LL JUST GO RIGHT AHEAD ANYWAY!

COME TO THINK OF IT, THOUGH, IT'S RATHER BIG... WELL HAVE A LITTLE TROUBLE MOVING IT!

GOSH, G.A., AND SUPPOSE IT TURNS OUT TO BE THE WRONG ONE AFTER ALL!

NO, SPEEDY, IT MUST BE THE RIGHT ONE! REMEMBER THAT CLUE... "THROUGH THE HEAVENS IT DROVE, THROUGH A PAST IMPERILLED, TO BE SAFE AT LAST AS THE FUTURE'S HERALD."

YES, THE ONLY THING THAT DRIVES THROUGH THE HEAVENS AND REACHES EARTH IS A METEORITE! AND OF ALL THE MUSEUMS WE'VE INVESTIGATED, THIS ONE FITS THE BILL BEST!





EASY, SPEEDY, WE
DON'T WANT TO
HURT HIM!

NOTHING WILL
BE HURT BUT
HIS FEELINGS
G.A.!

WHAT NOW,
G.A.?

HELLO,
HELLO...
WHAT HAPPENED,
MULCAHY?

WE'LL TIE HIM UP
AND PUT HIM IN
A SAFE PLACE, THEN
GO AHEAD IN A
DIFFERENT WAY FROM
BEFORE! WE CAN'T RISK
SETTING OFF THAT
ALARM AGAIN!

PRESENTLY, AS THE POLICEMAN IS DEPOSITED
IN A SHADY ALLEY...

WE DON'T WANT
THE WHOLE METEOR-
ITE, SPEEDY, WE
WANT WHAT'S IN IT!
REMEMBER THOSE
WORDS, "TO BE SAFE
AT LAST" ... THEY
HAVE A DOUBLE
MEANING!

YOU MEAN THAT THE
METEORITE IS NOT
ONLY SAFE, BUT
A **SAFE**?

EXACTLY, THIS METEOR-
ITE IS INTERESTING
FROM A SCIENTIFIC
POINT OF VIEW, BUT NOT
VALUABLE FINANCIALLY
UNLESS SOMETHING
WAS PUT INSIDE IT!

I THINK YOU'RE
RIGHT, G.A.! WHILE
I WAS UP THERE
LOOKING AT
IT, I THOUGHT
I SAW A CRACK
IN THE SIDE AS
IF A DOOR HAD
BEEN CUT IN
IT!

SO, WE'LL
SIMPLY OPEN...
NOW WHAT'S
THAT?

EEEEEEEEE...

THE GREEN ARROW
AND SPEEDY....
MAYBE THEY CAN
TELL US WHAT
HAPPENED!

MORE POLICE!
IF WE'RE NOT
CAREFUL, WE'LL
REALLY BEGIN
TO FEEL LIKE
CROOKS!

WE GOT A FUNNY CALL, GREEN ARROW, AND CAME HERE TO INVESTIGATE! YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANY SIGNS OF TROUBLE, HAVE YOU?

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR IT MYSELF! DON'T WORRY, OFFICER, I'LL KEEP MY EYES OPEN!

COME ON, SPEEDY, BACK TO THE ARROW-CAR FOR OUR SUPPLIES...

GOSH, NOW I'M BEGINNING TO REALIZE WHAT A REAL CROOK GOES THROUGH! AM I GLAD WE'RE NOT ACTUALLY DOING ANYTHING DISHONEST!

THESE STICKS OF DYNAMITE THAT WERE TO BE USED FOR BLASTING TREE STUMPS ON OLIVER QUEEN'S FARM WILL COME IN HANDY!

WHEEEEE...

HUH..? THAT'S A POLICE WHISTLE! WE DIDN'T TIE THE MUL-CAHY UP TIGHTLY ENOUGH...HE MUST HAVE GOT LOOSE!

WHICH MEANS THAT THE SQUAD CAR FULL OF POLICE WILL BE COMING BACK! STEP ON IT, SPEEDY!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME... JUST DON'T DROP THAT DYNAMITE!

NOW TO CRACK OPEN THAT METEORITE... WITH THE POLICE LOOKING ON!

AND YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT A MERE BURGLAR ALARM!

WELL, I'M NOT ANY LONGER... IN A MINUTE, THERE'LL BE ENOUGH NOISE TO BRING EVERY POLICEMAN IN THE CITY! HERE GOES!







LATER, MIDNIGHT HEAD-LINES SPREAD THE STARTLING NEWS!

HMM, QUITE A LITTLE TROUBLE THOSE LADS HAD! BUT I'M GLAD TO SEE THEY GOT WHAT THEY WENT AFTER!

BUT DESPITE THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THEIR MISSION, THE MASTER BOWMEN ARE PUZZLED!

WELL, G.A., WE GOT WHAT WE WENT AFTER BUT I STILL CAN'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT THAT CROOK MULCAHY CHASED LAST MONTH! HOW DID THAT CROOK KNOW WHAT WAS IN THAT METEORITE?

MIGHT BE THAT DARREL ASKED SOME OTHER PEOPLE TO DO THE SAME JOBS HE LATER CHALLENGED US TO DO!

IM LOOKING FORWARD TO IT, G.A.! I WONDER IF THE OTHER LEGIONNAIRES ARE HAVING AS EXCITING A TIME AS WE AND THE AVENGER DO?



150 MILE RACE

TO SAVE A NATION!

IN 490 B.C. A POWER-HUNGRY RULER SENT HIS GANGSTER ARMY AGAINST BRAVE LITTLE GREECE. THE PERSIANS SOON OVERWHELMED THE BORDER CITY OF ERITREA... AND THE CONQUERING GENERAL GLOATS ...



MELTIADES PLANS TO MARCH OUT TO MEET THE PERSIANS ON THE PLAINS OF MARATHON...BUT BEFORE THEY START



See the NEW Thom McAn "MARATHON!"

THE MARATHON WAS DESIGNED FOR FELLOWS LIKE YOU! BUILT TO TAKE PUNISHMENT AND COME UP FOR MORE, THIS "HUSKY" HAS THE FAMOUS MEL-FLEX SOLE...SPRINGY, FLEXIBLE, WATERPROOF, INSULATED AGAINST HEAT AND COLD... AND GUARANTEED TO OUTLAST LEATHER EVERY TIME! THE MOCCASIN-DESIGN GIVES YOUR FOOT PLENTY OF ROOM TO SPREAD (IMPORTANT FOR QUICK STARTS AND STOPS). . . AND THE DOUBLE-FLAP LACING GIVES YOU ADJUSTABLE INSTEPT FIT FOR EXTRA SUPPORT AND SNUGNESS!

MAKE SURE YOUR NEXT SHOES ARE THOM MCAN "MARATHONS!"

ONLY
\$2.99



EQUIPPED ONLY WITH EXTRA SANDALS AND A FLASK OF WATER, THE YOUNG ATHLETE STARTS TOWARD SPARTA...

HOUR AFTER HOUR, ALL DAY AND THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, PHILIPPIDES' GREAT ENDURANCE CARRIES HIM ON... AND ON.... AND ON...

YOU CARRY OUR FATE, COMRADE! GOOD LUCK!



TWO DAYS AND TWO NIGHTS AFTER HE LEFT ATHENS, PHILIPPIDES STUMBLING EXHAUSTED INTO THE ARMS OF A SURPRISED SPARTAN GUARD...

TAKE ME TO YOUR COMMANDER!



THE ARMY OF SPARTA STARTS A FORCED MARCH TO JOIN ITS ALLIES AT MARATHON --



BRAVE MEN DEFENDING THEIR NATIVE COUNTRY, THE OUT-NUMBERED GREEKS FORCE THE MIGHTY ARMY TO FLEE... A GREAT VICTORY FOR THE WORLD'S FIRST DEMOCRACY!

And later...

YOU HAVE RUN THE GREATEST RACE IN HISTORY, MY SON. AND ALL GREECE THANKS YOU!



G. ROUSSEAU

OUR ARMY FIGHTS ON ITS FEET, TOO!

EVEN IN TODAY'S MECHANIZED WARFARE, THERE'S PLENTY OF MARCHING AND FIGHTING ON FOOT... AND UNCLE SAM'S SOLDIERS NEED THE FINEST LEATHER AND EXPERT WORKMANSHIP IN THEIR SHOES. SKILLED CRAFTSMEN IN THOM MCAN'S 21 HUGE FACTORIES HAVE MADE MILLIONS OF PAIRS OF ARMY SHOES... ARE RIGHT NOW TURNING OUT 25 PAIRS A MINUTE OF THE SPECIAL NEW ARMY ALL-PURPOSE BOOT! THESE SAME CRAFTSMEN BUILD EXTRA MILEAGE INTO THOM MCAN SHOES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY. STOP IN AT ONE OF THE 600 THOM MCAN STORES WITH THE FAMILIAR WHITE FRONT. AND SEE FOR YOURSELF WHY MORE PEOPLE BUY AT THOM MCAN'S THAN AT ANY OTHER SHOE STORE IN THE COUNTRY!

PHILIPPIDES' AMAZING FEAT OF STRENGTH AND THE GREAT GREEK VICTORY ARE REMEMBERED IN TODAY'S LONG DISTANCE "MARATHON RACE!"



THOM MCAN

STARRING

THE SHINING
KNIGHTCHAPTER
V

TONS OF STEEL GUARD
PRECIOUS RELICS OF THE
PAST, THREATENING
DEATH TO UNWARY SEEK-
ERS OF WEALTH! BUT THE
SHINING KNIGHT NEVER
YET HESITATED BEFORE
DANGER, AND DOES NOT
DO SO NOW, AS HE SEEKS
TO CUT THROUGH ALL
MAZES TO SOLVE ...

• THE
PUZZLE
OF THE
PYRAMID! •



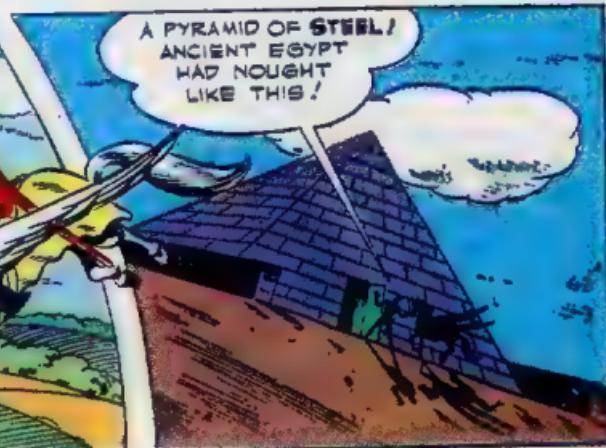
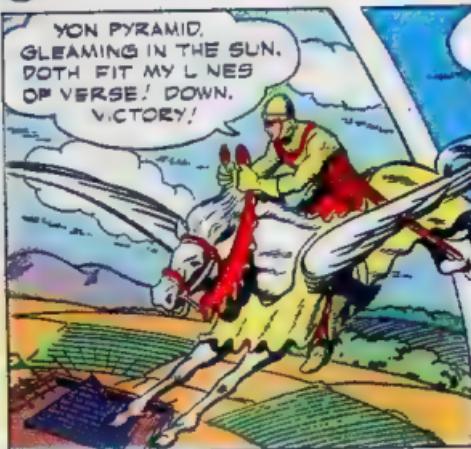
HIGH ABOVE A PEACEFUL WINDING
RIBBON OF WATER PLIES ANOTHER
SOLDIER OF VICTORY IN SEARCH OF
TREASURE - THE SHINING KNIGHT!

MY QUEST IS SURE!
THE CLUE CAN HAVE
BUT A SINGLE MEANING!
SOME OBJECT OF
ANCIENT EGYPT HAS
BEEN BROUGHT
HERE...



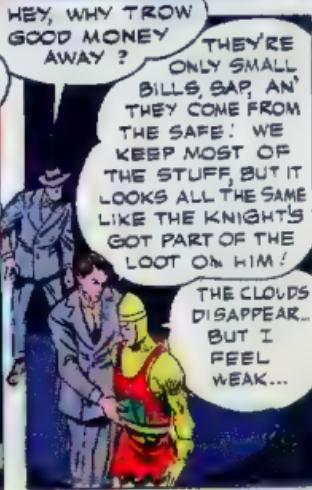
THE CLUE OF THE CHAMPION OF
CHIVALRY...

From the shores of the Nile
to the Hudson's banks.
For ancient wisdom,
we give our thanks





YEEEEEOWWW!
POUL
BALL!



TOO BAD YA FEEL SO WEAK, KNIGHT, BUT I'LL HELP YA OUT! RIGHT TOWARDS THAT WINDOW... AND WHEN WE FINISH WITH YOU, WE'LL USE YOUR SWORD TO KNOCK OFF THAT WATCHMAN WE KAYOED!

I AM NOT SO WEAK AS HE THINKS... A FEW MORE MOMENTS TO RECOVER MY STRENGTH...

MAYHAP I CAN WIN A STAY BY FLATTERY...

CLEVER AIN'T THE WORD FOR IT, KNIGHT! THE BOYS DON'T CALL ME ALEX THE GREAT FOR NOTHIN'!



BUT NOW IT'S TIME FOR THAT LITTLE SHOVE, TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YA FELL OUTTA THE WINDOW TRYIN' TO GET ON YOUR NAG!

MY STEED! 'TIS A THOUGHT... VICTORY MAY NOT BE IN TIME TO AID ME, BUT THESE VILLAINS WILL NOT KNOW THAT!

SO LONG SAP... DROP IN AGAIN SOME-TIME!

HOLA, VICTORY, I HAVE NEED OF THEE!

NO, YA DON'T CHUM! WE'LL FINISH YA SOME OTHER WAY!

THE VARLETS THEMSELVES HAVE SAVED ME, AS I THOUGHT THEY WOULD! AND QUICKLY MY STRENGTH RETURNS!



WELL SLICE YA WID YOUR OWN SWORD! IT'LL LOOK LIKE YA CUT YOURSELF BY ACCIDENT!

NO SKILLED SWORDSMAN WOULD SUFFER SO CLUMSY AN ACCIDENT, BASE CHURL!

BUT A LOUT WHO HAS NEVER WEILED THE WEAPON IS EASILY DIS-ARMED!

OWWW, MY HAND!



WHIRLING LIKE A TOP, SIR JUSTIN MAKES HIS GLEAMING BLADE DESCRIBE A GLITTERING ARC! THE FLAT OF THE STEEL RESOUNDS FROM SKULL AFTER SKULL!



NOW TO SHOW THE VILLIANS SWORD PLAY THEY CAN REALLY ADMIRE!

PRESENTLY...

THE SHINING KNIGHT! STRANGE DOINGS SOMEBODY PHONED IN THERE WERE SOME FUNNY DOINGS AROUND HERE!

INDEED THESE VILLIANS PLANNED TO MAKE ME THE SEEING AUTHOR OF THEIR CRIME!



AFTER QUICK EXPLANATIONS...

I STILL HAVE MY PROBLEM TO SOLVE... AND WHAT WITH BEING DISTRACTED WITH THIS ALEX THE GREAT...



ALEX THE GREAT? MAYHAP THAT IS THE ANSWER! THE MACEDONIAN WASTED NOT HIS TIME ON AN INTRICATE PROBLEM...



HE SLASHED THROUGH DIFFICULTIES... THUS!



SO THIS IS MY LOOT! SHOES THAT AN INFANT WORE, A CHILD'S TOYS... STRANGE TREASURES INDEED, TO BE SO WELL HIDDEN!



METHOUGHT DARREL SPOKE OF GOLD AND JEWELS, NOT THESE! THERE IS SOME HITHERTO UNSPECTED MYSTERY HERE... I MUST CONSULT WITH MY COMRADES!

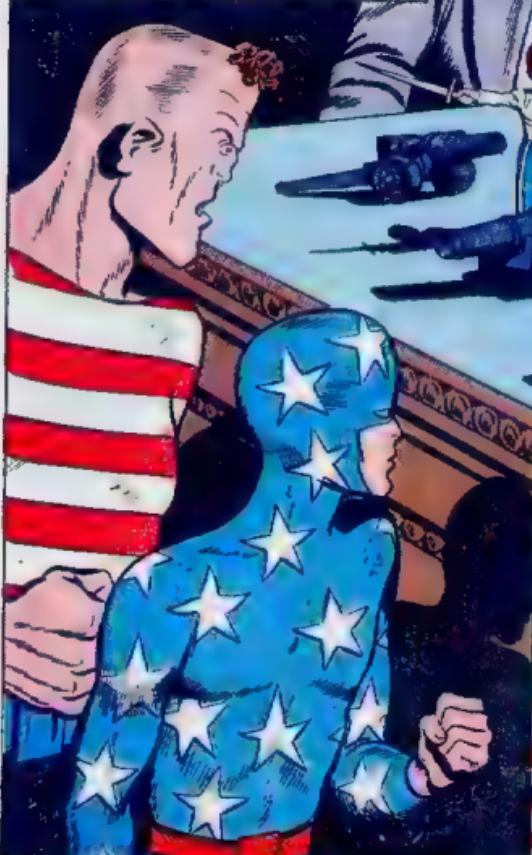


starring The Star-Spangled Kid!

CHAR.
VI

IT IS A STRANGE PLAYGROUND TO WHICH THE STAR-SPANGLED KID AND STRIPESY ARE DRAWN BY THEIR CLUE -- A PLAYGROUND BUILT APPARENTLY FOR MIDGETS! BUT DIMINUTIVE SURROUNDINGS ARE A FRAME FOR BIG DOINGS WHEN THE LORDS OF THE UNDER-WORLD ACTUALLY BRING THE ALL-AMERICAN DUO TO TRIAL, AND JUDICIAILY AGREE ON...

"MURDER IN MINIATURE!"



THE STAR-SPANGLED KID AND STRIPESY EXAMINE THEIR CLUE...

"MELT 'EM AN' PAR-
BOIL 'EM" ... IT DONT
MAKE SENSE, KID!"

YOU'RE NOT SEEING IT
STRAIGHT, STRIPESY!
IT SAYS, "MULTUM
IN PARVUM" ...
THAT'S LATIN FOR
"MUCH IN
LITTLE!"



THE ENTIRE CLUE IS:
"MULTUM IN PARVO" RUNS
THE LATIN MOTTO, THERE'S
LITTLE ENOUGH IN
THE KIND MAN'S GROTTO!"

EVEN IN ENGLISH,
IT DON'T MEAN
NOTHIN'!

YES IT DOES!
WHATEVER WE'RE
LOOKING FOR, WELL
FIND IN A GROTTO,
WHICH IS A SORT
OF CAVE!

2 HOURS LATER...

GOSH, KID, ALL WE
FOUND HERE WAS
WHAT WE FOUND
IN THE OTHER
CAVES... BATS!

"THE
KIND
MAN'S
GROTTO."
IF WE
ONLY KNEW
WHO THE
"KIND MAN"
WAS...

GREAT SCOTT, I'VE
GOT IT! DARREL!

YA MEAN
HE'S THE KIND
GUY? YA MIGHT
BE RIGHT, KID!
HE THINKS ENOUGH
OF HIMSELF TO PRAISE
HIMSELF LIKE THAT!

LATER, AFTER INQUIRY AT A LOCAL
NEWSPAPER OFFICE...

WE'RE ON THE RIGHT
TRACK AT LAST!
DARREL WAS ONCE
INTERESTED IN RE-
FORMING CRIMINALS...
SO HE PICKED THE
MOST CRIME-RIDDEN
TOWN IN THE COUNTRY,
AND FIXED UP A GROTTO
FOR CROOKS, IN THE
TOUGHEST
PART OF
TOWN!

WHAT
A
WHACK!

AND AFTER A LENGTHY JOURNEY...

THIS IS THE PLACE,
ALL RIGHT, KID! IT'S
THE KIND MAN'S GROTTO...
AND EVERYTHING'S
"LITTLE ENOUGH"
HERE!

YES,
AND I'VE
GOT AN IDEA
WHERE THE "MUCH
IN LITTLE" IS, TOO!

UNEXPECTEDLY...

THE STAR-
SPANGLED KID
AND
STRIPESY!

KANSAS
CITY
KANE!

JUST A MINUTE, CHUM! I AINT WOKIN' ME OLD RACKETS NO MORE! I'M HERB TAKIN' CARE OF THE PLACE FER MR. DARREL! SO DONT YOU GO STARTIN' NUTTIN'!

SWAN, DON'T TRY TO KID ME!

TAKE IT EASY, STRIPESY! WEVE NO EVIDENCE THAT HE'S DOING ANYTHING WRONG... AND BEIDES, WE DONT COME HERE TO FIGHT ANYWAY!

THAT'S RIGHT, K.D. THIS IS NO PLACE FER FIGHTIN'... IT'S A PLAYGROUND! MR. DARREL USED TO LIKE IT SO MUCH, HE CAME HERE H SSELF EVERY WEEK UNTIL A COUPLA MONTHS AGO! I DONT KNOW WHY HE STOPPED COMIN'!

WONDER WHY DARREL STOPPED COMIN', KID...

NEVER MIND DARREL NOW! WEVE GOT A JOB TO DO!

THE CROOKS AROUND HERE HAVE CLEANED OUT PLENTY OF HONEST MEN'S BANKS! NOW WE'RE GOING TO CLEAN OUT THEIR BANKS!

HUH? YOU MEAN DARREL PUT THE STUFF THERE?

I CAN'T BE SURE, STRIPESY UNTIL WE LOOK! BUT WHAT BETTER PLACE IS THERE TO KEEP MONEY? AND THIS IS THE QUICKEST WAY TO GET TO IT!

BUT AS THE STAR-SPANGLED KID SEEKS TO OPEN THE VAULT...

WHEEE

THAT'S DARREL ALL OVER! HE DOESNT PUT HIS MONEY IN A REAL BANK, PROTECTED BY STEEL WALLS... HE PUTS IT INSTEAD INTO A FLIMSY TOY, SURROUNDED BY CROOKS!

BUT YA GOTTA ADMIT, KID, IT'S BEEN SAFER HERE THAN THE DOUGH IN SOME OTHER BANKS!



Suddenly...

THE STAR-
SPANGLED
KID AND
STRIPESY!

AN' LOOK WHAT
DEY'RE DOIN'. DEY'RE
ROBBIN' OUR
JOINT!

NOW DON'T TELL ME
THESE GUYS ARE
JUST CARETAKERS,
TOO!

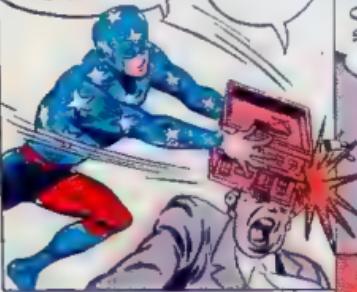
OWWW!

HOLY COW,
KID! CHOWDER-
HEAD CHARLIE,
CECIL THE CHIMP...
THE ROGUES'
GALLERY IN
PERSON!



IF THERE'S ANY
TAKING CARE TO
BE DONE, WELL
DO IT!

YIII!



A TOUCHBACK IS
A GOOD PLAY
TOO, KID!

BUT WITH THE ADVENT
OF UNDERWORLD RE-
INFORCEMENTS...

THIS CALLS FOR
ORGANIZED DEFENCE.
STRIPESY!
ZZ ZZ...

GOTCHA,
KID!



THE OLD
TRY FOR
A FIELD GOAL!

YES, IT MAKES
ITS POINTS!



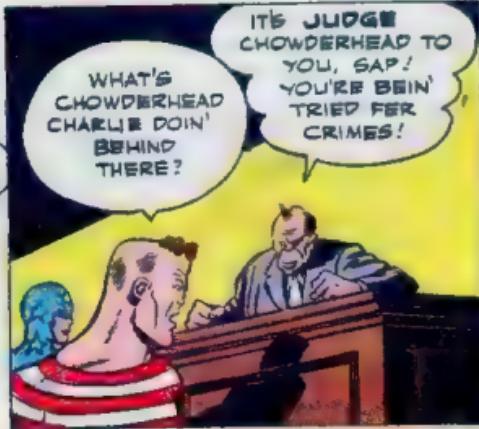
BUT AS THE PARTNERS IN
PERIL ARE FIGHTING
THROUGH TO VICTORY...



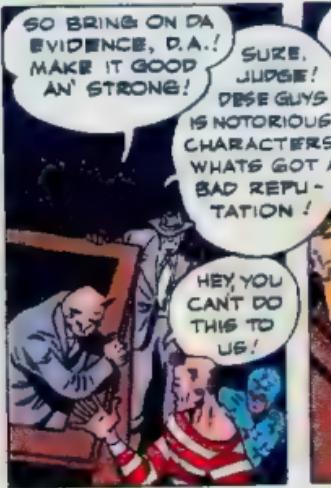
NEXT MOMENT, ACTUATED BY AN ACCIDENTALLY THROWN SWITCH...



FIGHTING GALLANTLY ALONE AGAINST ODDS, THE STAR-SPANGLED KID IS OVERWHELMED! AND SHORTLY...



WE'RE TIRED OF YOU GUYS BUSTIN' UP GOOD LEGITIMATE RACKETS LIKE HOUSEBREAKIN', SAFE-CRACKIN' AN' POCKET-PICKIN'! AN' WHEN YOU ROB OUR OWN BANK... DAT'S DA LAST STRAW!





CHAPTER 7

TIME HAS PASSED! THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY HAVE CONSULTED CONCERNING THEIR DISCOVERIES, AND NOW THEY ONCE MORE VISIT THE ECCENTRIC MR. DARREL...

YES, MR. DARREL! FIRST, WHY DID YOU LET YOUR EDITOR SELL THAT PRINTING PRESS, IF YOU KNEW HOW VALUABLE ITS CONTENTS WERE?

AH, I SEE THAT YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED, GENTLEMEN. I EXPECTED YOU WOULD... I HAVE A CHECK ALL READY FOR YOU!

JUST A MINUTE, FRIEND... THERE'S A FEW QUESTIONS MY PARTNERS WOULD LIKE TO ASK!

WHY... UGH.... REALLY....

SECOND, WHY DID YOU SEND SOMEONE ELSE TO OPEN THAT METEORITE?

THIRDLY, WHY DIDST THOU DESIRE ME TO RISK MY LIFE TO GATHER SUCH TRIFLES AS THESE?

FOURTH, HOW COME YA STOPPED PAYIN' VISITS TO THAT GROTTO? KANSAS CITY KANE SAYS YA USED TO ENJOY THE PLACE!



GENTLEMEN, YOU ASTONISH ME! I HAD EXPECTED A HAPPY, CAREFREE ATTITUDE! INSTEAD, YOU SEEM TO BE ACCUSING ME OF SOMETHING...

YOU'RE RIGHT, VARMINT, WE ARE ACCUSIN' YUH! AND SEEIN' AS HOW YOU WON'T ANSWER OUR QUESTIONS, WE'LL ANSWER THEM FOR YOU!

FIRST, YOU WEREN'T INTERESTED IN THAT PRESS BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T KNOW HOW VALUABLE IT WAS! CLEVER ENOUGH TO FIGURE OUT CLUE!

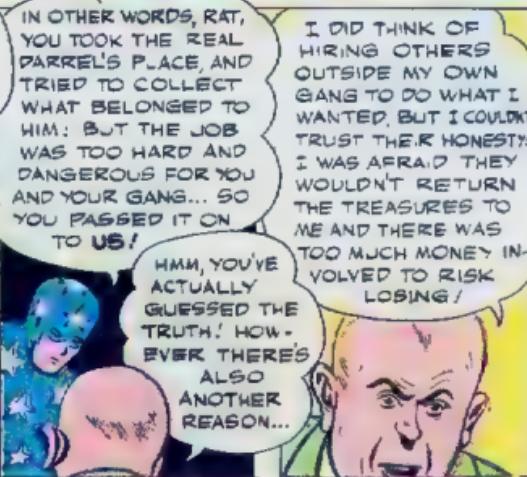


AS FOR THE LAST QUESTION... WHY DID MR. DARREL STOP COMIN' TO THE GROTTO...

THE ANSWER IS.... MR. DARREL ISN'T MR. DARREL!



IN OTHER WORDS, RAT, YOU TOOK THE REAL DARREL'S PLACE, AND TRIED TO COLLECT WHAT BELONGED TO HIM: BUT THE JOB WAS TOO HARD AND DANGEROUS FOR YOU AND YOUR GANG... SO YOU PASSED IT ON TO US!



HMM, YOU'VE ACTUALLY GUESSED THE TRUTH! HOW-EVER THERE'S ALSO ANOTHER REASON...

I DID THINK OF HIRING OTHERS OUTSIDE MY OWN GANG TO DO WHAT I WANTED, BUT I COULDN'T TRUST THEIR HONESTY: I WAS AFRAID THEY WOULDN'T RETURN THE TREASURES TO ME AND THERE WAS TOO MUCH MONEY INVOLVED TO RISK LOSING!





A BRIEF FREE-FOR-ALL....



AND EVENTUALLY...

I WAS WILLING TO GIVE YOU THIS CHECK FOR A MILLION... BUT NOW THAT YOU'VE RUINED EVERYTHING, YOU'LL NEVER GET IT, CURSE YOU!

HA, HA! CHECKS SIGNED BY FAKE DARREL NOT WORTH A CENT.

EVEN IF IT WAS WORTH A MILLION, PARDNER, IT WOULDN'T BE HALF AS IMPORTANT TO US AS SEEIN' JUSTICE DONE!



PRESENTLY, IN THE WINE-CELLAR...

HERE'S THE REAL DARREL, BOYS, JUST AS WE SUSPECTED!

THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY! I'M SAVED!



AS THIS TALE OF THE RESCUE IS TOLD...

IN A WAY, WHAT HAPPENED IS MY OWN FAULT, GENTLEMEN: I THOUGHT IT A GOOD JOKE ON MY FRIENDS TO HAVE A SECRETARY THEY'D MISTAKE FOR ME! I DIDN'T REALIZE HE WAS DISHONEST!...

AND THAT THE JOKE WOULD BACKFIRE WHEN HE REALLY DECIDED TO TAKE YOUR PLACE! FORTUNATELY, YOUR MONEY WAS SO WELL HIDDEN, HE HAD TO CALL US IN TO HELP FIND IT!



LATER...

HERE'S THE CHECK PROMISED YOU, GENTLEMEN! YOU DID WHAT YOU WERE CHALLENGED TO DO... AND YOU RESCUED ME INTO THE BARGAIN! THAT'S CERTAINLY WORTH THE MILLION TO ME!

OH, BOY! CHARITIES GET RICH!

AND SIDE-WINDERS GO TO JAIL... AS THEY ALWAYS WILL WHEN THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY GET AFTER THEM!





QUIZ QUIX

PROP.
DWAH-
WAH-



HERE'S ANOTHER SMALL PARCEL OF BRAIN-TWISTERS FOR YOU, CYHUMS - SEE IF YOU CAN UNRAVEL 'EM. THE CORRECT ANSWERS ARE ENGRAVED IN EACH PANEL IN CASE YOU COME A CROPPER - !

WHY DIDN'T THEY PLAY CARDS ON THE ARK ?



BECAUSE NOAH SAT ON THE DECK.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A STENOGRAFHER AND SIXTEEN OUNCES ?



ONE POUNDS AWAY
AND THE OTHER
WEIGHS A POUND.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ELEPHANT AND A FLEA ?



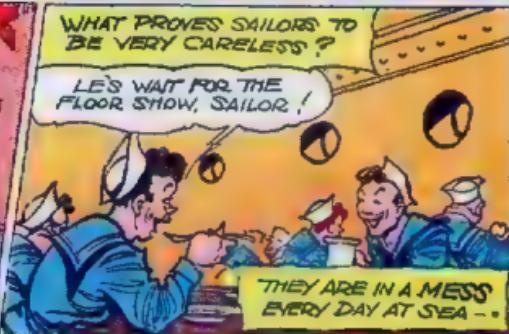
WHAT THINGS INCREASE THE MORE YOU CONTRACT THEM - ?



WHAT IS THAT WHICH MAKES EVERYBODY SICK BUT THOSE WHO SWALLOW IT ?



WHAT PROVES SAILORS TO BE VERY CARELESS ?



JACK ARMSTRONG TRU-FLITE FIGHTER MODELS

Actually Fly

GLIDE . . . SOAR . . . LOOP . . . ROLL

Fairey Fulmar



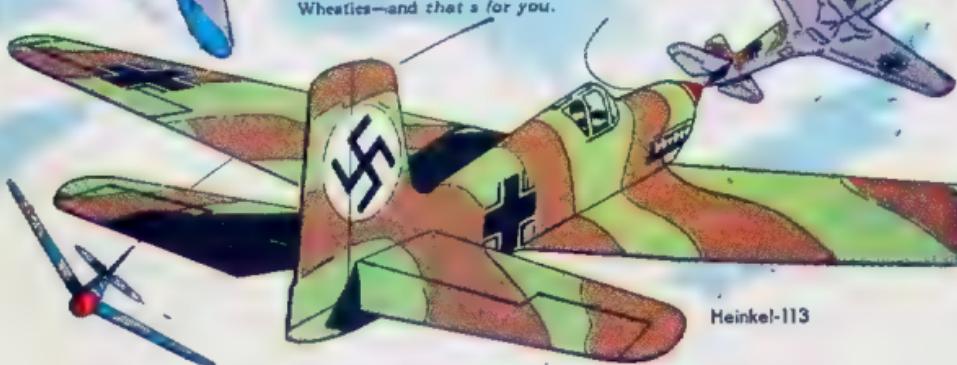
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"Breakfast of
Champions"
WITH MILK AND FRUIT

DEATH STRIKES TWICE

by Blair Bolton

INSPECTOR BRAD MATHEWS was satisfied at last. For three years he had driven himself without mercy. Stubbornly, he had gathered a mass of information, and patiently he had pieced the loose strands together. The evidence was complete. More important, not even the shrewdest lawyer in the world could find a loophole in it. And "Big Mike" Donelli, Mathews knew, had the money to hire himself the shrewdest lawyers in the business.

Mathews closed the folder he had been studying and laid it neatly on his desk. A smile on his lips, he clasped his hands behind his head and leaned back in his swivel chair. "It's been a long time," he thought. "But I've got Big Mike where I want him. This is going to be a real showdown!"

The opening of his door interrupted Mathews' pleasant thoughts. Tommy Heath, reporter on the *Globe News*, was standing in the doorway. There was a worried expression on his face as he glanced around the room.

"Busy, inspector?" the young reporter asked.

"Nope! Come on in, Tommy," Mathews replied, dropping his legs from the desk. "What's bothering you? In trouble?"

The reporter made sure the door was tightly closed before he came into the room. "I've been hearing rumors," he said in a low tone. Then he stepped up to the desk and leaned toward Mathews tensely. "I thought you should know them, inspector. They concern you—the state of your health!"

The smile was still playing around the corners of his mouth, but his gray eyes turned hard and cold. "Just what kind of rumors were they?"

"In a nutshell, inspector, Big Mike is after you. And when he

is out to get someone—well, that's nothing to joke about."

Mathews chewed his cigar thoughtfully. "Yes, I know," he murmured. The reporter's words reminded him that he still had a big job ahead. Getting evidence on Big Mike had been the hardest task of his long career on the police force. But making the evidence stick might prove even harder. For a moment, Mathews wondered if he was underestimating his enemy. Big Mike was smart, smarter than the usual run of racketeers infesting the city. He had money and he had a strongly disciplined mob in his organization. He was also a ruthless killer in his own right. And Big Mike also knew that a certain Inspector Mathews was getting ready to crack down on him. A combination like that was deadly.

Tommy Heath watched the older man intently. The smile was still on Mathews' face. "You look like the cat that swallowed the canary," Tommy remarked. "And when you look like that, I know you've got a story for my paper. How about spilling it, inspector?"

"Change that to a cat that was about to catch a rat and you'll be right," Mathews corrected him. "The biggest rat in the city!"

"You mean—?" Heath began excitedly. "You mean—Big Mike himself?"

Mathews pushed his chair away from the desk and stood up. "I mean Big Mike himself!" He laughed as he picked up the folder from his desk. "This folder represents three years of hard work, Tommy. But it also represents ten years up the river for Big Mike!"

Mathews crossed the room and placed the folder in a filing cabinet. He closed and locked the drawer. "I'm going to pick

up Donelli tonight, Tommy. Want to come along?"

"Sure!" the reporter replied excitedly. "I didn't know you were that close on his trail."

"No one does," Mathews said. Then he frowned. He remembered the rumors the keen reporter had just heard. "Unless Big Mike suspects it."

"But how could he?"

"By keeping tabs on the possible witnesses against him. He's been watching me work carefully," Mathews rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Yes, I think Big Mike knows I'm ready to slap him down."

Mathews stepped quickly to his desk and opened a drawer. He picked up his service revolver, quickly made sure it was loaded, and slipped it into his coat pocket. "I might need this," he remarked. "Big Mike will take any chances to stay free. But I'm not going to fail—not after trailing him for three years!"

Mathews was reaching for his hat when his phone rang. He picked it up. "Hello? Inspector Mathews speaking."

"Dad! Dad! Is that you? Oh! I'm glad I found you in!" It was his daughter Mary's voice. Mathews' long years on the police force had taught him to recognize fear and hysteria in a human voice. And he heard it now in his daughter's.

"Yes, Mary, it's dad," he said calmly. "What's the matter?"

"Come home quickly, dad! Something's happened! Something terrible!" Mary hesitated for a minute, then added quickly, "Dad! I—I just killed a man!"

Something suddenly went cold inside Mathews' heart. Mary kill a man? Impossible! It must be some trick! Perhaps a frame-up staged by Big Mike? These thoughts flashed through his mind with ice-cold clarity.

"All right, Mary. I'm coming home right away. Just don't do anything until I get there!" He replaced the receiver slowly and turned to Tommy.

"What's up, inspector? You look a little green around the gills!"

"I think Big Mike is already starting to hit 'back'!"

"Anything I can do?"

"No, Tommy, this is my job. I've got to do whatever has to be done—alone!" Mathews put his hat on. At the door, he turned to the reporter. "Just keep quiet about the Donelli case until I give the go ahead sign." An instant later, Mathews had closed the door behind him and was hurrying downstairs to his car.

The brakes on his car screeched wildly as he took the corner on two wheels and pulled over to the curb. There was a big, black limousine parked in front of his house and he stopped behind it. Swiftly, he ran up the low stoop to the front door. As he reached for the doorknob, the door suddenly swung open. Mary was sobbing in his arms.

"Easy, kid, easy," he whispered, as he led her into the hall, closing the door behind him. "Now let's have the story."

"I was upstairs when the front doorbell rang," Mary sobbed. "I started down the stairs to see who it was when I saw a man standing at the bottom of the steps. I became frightened and ran to your room to get your revolver. Then I pointed the gun at the man and asked what he wanted. He didn't reply, so I fired. I . . . I was frightened. The man just fell over. He was dead when I came downstairs."

The body was still lying at the foot of the stairs. Mathews bent over and turned it on its back. The stiff arms were spread out. The man had been shot neatly through the heart.

"Who is this man?" Mathews asked.

"I—I don't know, dad,"

Mary replied.

"I can tell you who he is," a voice spoke from the living room.

Mathews whirled around swiftly, his hand dipping into his pocket for his gun. "Big Mike!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"Waiting for you," Big Mike replied, laughing.

"He came in just after I killed the man, dad," Mary explained.

"Yeah, and the guy your kid bumped off happens to be one of my lawyers! Is that how you expect to send me up the river, Inspector? Knocking off my lawyers?" Big Mike was standing in the doorway of the living room, a big grin creasing his fat face. Behind him was Sprocket, his chief trigger-man.

Mathews faced Donelli. "What do you want?" he asked, his eyes blazing. There was no doubt about it now—Big Mike had staged this frame-up.

"I sent my lawyer in to see you and arrange a little conference while I waited outside in my car. The next thing I know there's a shot. Me and Sprocket come in, and there's your kid with a smoking gun in her hand." Donelli shook his head. "It's gonna look bad, copper! A murder rap ain't something even you can cover up!"

"Yeah, I guess this'll wash up the case against you, boss," Sprocket put in, grinning.

"We can make a deal, copper," Donelli said, watching Mathews carefully with his small piggish eyes.

"What's the deal?" Mathews asked.

"With us as witnesses," Donelli said, "your kid can forget the whole thing if you hand over all the evidence you got against my organization."

"So that's what you want! You framed this, Donelli!"

Donelli's fat body shook as he chuckled softly. "You can't prove nothing, copper! Make up your mind! Is it a deal?"

"All right!" Mathews replied. His shoulders sagged. He

suddenly looked old. "There's nothing I can do about it."

"That's right," Donelli said. "Take the *corpus delicti* into my car, Sprocket."

"You wait for me, Mary. I'll call you from the office." Without a word, Mary turned and went up to her room. Mathews followed Donelli to the car.

"The stiff is in the back of the car, Mathews. We'll dump it after I get the papers," Donelli remarked.

When the big car stopped in front of headquarters, Donelli followed Mathews out. Together they went into Mathews' office.

Mathews opened the file and took out the folder with the evidence. "Here you are, Donelli. I guess that's what you want."

Donelli glanced through the folder quickly. He laughed softly. "Yeah! This is what I want. You won't need these papers no more—"

He never finished the sentence. Mathews fist had come up from the floor to land on his chin. There was a heavy thud as his body hit the floor. "I won't need them now, Donelli," Mathews said. "I've got an out and out murder rap to hang on you!"

Mathews picked up the phone on his desk. "Sarge? Donelli's car is parked outside. His triggerman Sprocket is in it. Bring him in. You'll find a dead body in Donelli's car. Send a couple of boys in here to take Donelli. The charge? Murder!"

Later, Tommy Heath was sitting in Mathews' office. Mathews had his hands clasped behind his head, leaning back and staring at the ceiling.

"What I don't understand, Inspector, is how you knew Mary didn't kill the man!" Tommy was saying.

"Easy," Mathews grinned. "When I examined the body, I saw that rigor mortis had already set in. That meant the man had been dead for several hours at least. He was already dead when Mary 'killed' him!"

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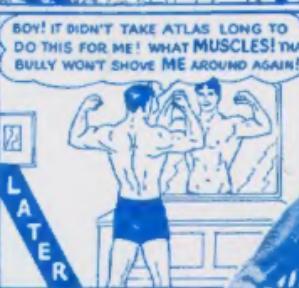
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